

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA  
HELENA DIVISION

ROBERT HEPPLER,

Plaintiff,

vs.

LEROY KIRKEGARD, MR.  
BASETA, SHELLY STYTH, and  
ROXANNE WIGERT,

Defendants.

CV 13-25-H-DWM-RKS

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE  
TO DISMISS COMPLAINT

Robert Heppler alleges prison staff violated his federally protected rights. (Doc. 2.) He filed a Complaint in forma pauperis but his allegations were so vague that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. He was given an opportunity to file an amended complaint and was given an extension of time within which to do so. No amended complaint has been filed. Therefore, for the reasons set forth in the Court's Order of August 14, 2013 (Doc. 9), this matter should be dismissed.

**“Strike” under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g)**

The Prison Litigation Reform Act prohibits prisoners from bringing forma pauperis civil actions if the prisoner has brought three or more actions in federal court that were dismissed for frivolousness, maliciousness, or for failure to state a

claim. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g). This dismissal constitutes a strike because Mr. Heppler failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.

### **Certification Regarding Appeal**

The Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure provide as follows:

[A] party who was permitted to proceed in forma pauperis in the district-court action, or who was determined to be financially unable to obtain an adequate defense in a criminal case, may proceed on appeal in forma pauperis without further authorization, unless:

(A) the district court-before or after the notice of appeal is filed-certifies that the appeal is not taken in good faith or finds that the party is not otherwise entitled to proceed in forma pauperis and states in writing its reasons for the certification or finding;

Fed. R.App. P. 24(a)(3)(A).

Analogously, 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3) provides “[a]n appeal may not be taken in forma pauperis if the trial court certifies in writing that it is not taken in good faith.” The good faith standard is an objective one. *See Coppedge v. United States*, 369 U.S. 438, 445 (1962). A plaintiff satisfies the “good faith” requirement if he or she seeks review of any issue that is “not frivolous.” *Gardner v. Pogue*, 558 F.2d 548, 551 (9th Cir. 1977) (*quoting Coppedge*, 369 U.S. at 445). For purposes of section 1915, an appeal is frivolous if it lacks any arguable basis in law or fact. *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325, 327 (1989); *Franklin v. Murphy*,

745 F.2d 1221, 1225 (9th Cir. 1984).

The finding that Mr. Heppler's Complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted is so clear no reasonable person could suppose an appeal would have merit. Therefore, the Court should certify that any appeal of this matter would not be taken in good faith.

### **Address Change**

At all times during the pendency of this action, Mr. Heppler shall immediately advise the Court of any change of address. Failure to file a notice of change of address may result in the dismissal of the action for failure to prosecute pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 41(b).

It is **RECOMMENDED:**

1. This matter should be dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. The Clerk of Court should be directed to close this matter and enter judgment in favor of Defendants pursuant to Rule 58 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

2. The Clerk of Court should be directed to have the docket reflect that this dismissal counts as a strike pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g) based upon Mr. Heppler's failure to state a claim.

3. The Clerk of Court should be directed to have the docket reflect that the

Court certifies pursuant to Rule 24(a)(3)(A) of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure that any appeal of this decision would not be taken in good faith. Mr. Heppler's failure to state a claim is so clear no reasonable person could suppose an appeal would have merit. The record makes plain the instant Complaint is frivolous as it lacks arguable substance in law or fact.

**NOTICE OF RIGHT TO OBJECT TO FINDINGS &  
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO OBJECT**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), Mr. Heppler may serve and file written objections to these Findings and Recommendations within fourteen (14) days of the date these Findings and Recommendations were served upon Mr. Heppler which is the date entered as indicated on the Notice of Electronic Filing. Any such filing should be captioned "Objections to Magistrate Judge's Findings and Recommendations."

If Mr. Heppler files objections, he must itemize each factual finding to which objection is made and identify the evidence in the record he relies on to contradict that finding. In addition, he must itemize each recommendation to which objection is made and set forth the authority he relies on to contradict that recommendation.

Failure to assert a relevant fact or argument in objections to these Findings

and Recommendations may preclude Mr. Heppler from relying on that fact or argument at a later stage of the proceeding. A district judge will make a de novo determination of those portions of the Findings and Recommendations to which objection is made. The district judge may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the Findings and Recommendations. Failure to timely file written objections may bar a de novo determination by the district judge and/or waive the right to appeal.

This order is not immediately appealable to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Any notice of appeal pursuant to Fed.R.App.P. 4(a), should not be filed until entry of the District Court's final judgment.

DATED this 29<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2013.

/s/ Keith Strong  
Keith Strong  
United States Magistrate Judge